

# The Charles E. Peterson Prize A Consistent Winner

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Over the last 10 years, HABS and the Athenaeum of Philadelphia have sponsored a measured drawings competition for architecture students. The Charles E. Peterson Prize Competition has proven to be an extremely successful means of attracting young people to the field of historic preservation and documentation.

Named after the founder of HABS, the competition has awarded \$11,000 during the past 10 competitions to the winning teams of architecture students. The competition participants must be students enrolled in a degree program. Though many are working toward their degree in architecture, others have entered the competition, including students of architectural history, landscape architecture, interior design, and American studies. In addition to being enrolled in a degree program, participants must be sponsored by a faculty member and must not be past or present employees of the HABS/HAER Division.

HABS started the Peterson Prize Competition in 1981, honoring Charles E. Peterson's 75th birthday, and awarded the first prizes in 1983, the year HABS celebrated its 50th birthday. HABS sought to educate architecture students in historic preservation and methods of documentation such as hand measuring and precise draftsmanship that were increasingly being ignored by the architecture schools. Much more emphasis is put on construction and design and as a result historic preservation and restoration are given less attention in the classroom. Few students become interested and knowledgeable in the preservation field. Furthermore, since the purpose of HABS is to record historic buildings through measured drawings and deposit the resultant documentation in the Library of Congress, the division is interested in receiving donated drawings of significant structures that have not yet been recorded to HABS standards. The stipulation in the competition rules stating that all drawings must be of a building that has not been recorded by HABS, or must make a substantial contribution to an existing set of HABS drawings, eliminates the possibility of any duplication between the work in the HABS office and the Peterson Prize submissions.

The Athenaeum of Philadelphia, an independent research library founded in 1814 specializing in 19th-century social and cultural history, agreed to co-sponsor the competition with the National Park Service (NPS). A cooperative agreement was written and the program was established in 1983. The cash awards for the Peterson Prize are endowed by a privately-held fund managed by The Athenaeum.

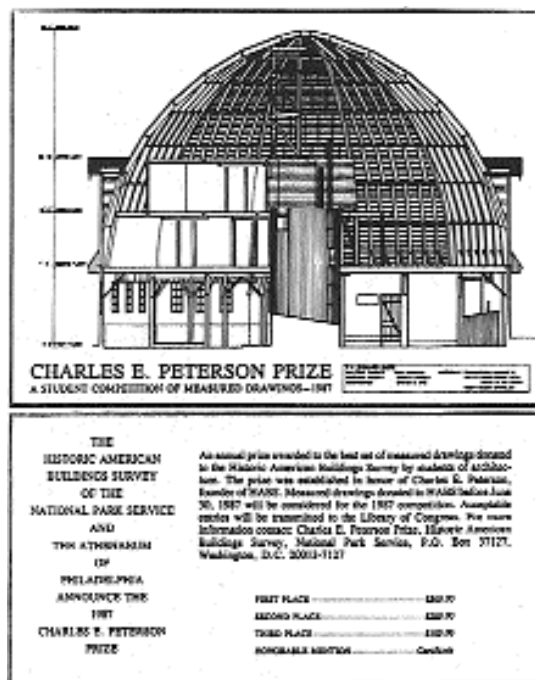
Since 1983, over 886 students from 44 colleges and universities have participated in the Charles E. Peterson Prize Competition. They have produced 2,055 measured drawings for inclusion in the HABS collection. A great variety of types of structures have been documented by Peterson Prize competitors, from churches and plantations to sugar mills and county fairgrounds. The students have worked alone and in groups, in required courses, electives, independent study and summer institutes. Several university professors have become quite resourceful in finding funding for their documentation efforts. Some University of Texas and University of Houston students receive stipends through the Winedale Preservation Institute during their summer of recording.

The State Historic Preservation Officer of Louisiana has supported four different schools of architecture in his state to enter Peterson Prize drawings. Recently the Rocky Mountain Regional Office of the NPS has helped new participants choose sites in the region that are in need of documentation to HABS standards.

The Peterson Prize Competition can be a terrific resource for cultural resource managers as long as the resulting drawings are not used as mitigation for a Federal project that will have an adverse effect on an historic structure. The jurors' rating scale encourages students to record structures of historic significance by awarding extra points if the structure is a National Historic Landmark, in a National Park, or on the National Register of Historic Places.

Each year through this program, the pool of students exposed to historic preservation grows and each year the quality of documentation they produce also increases. The

Charles E. Peterson Prize Competition has increased future architects', planners', and citizens' awareness and knowledge of historic buildings throughout the United States while adding more than 2,000 measured drawings to the HABS collection. Encouraging architecture students today to recognize, respect, and record this country's historic resources will result in benefits far into the future.



To advertise the competition posters are sent to the schools of architecture announcing the competition and the previous year's winners, in this case a round barn drawn by students at Washington State University.

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